No.04

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO CALLED ME?
YES. GO AHEAD AND TAKE A SEAT.
.....
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'VE RECEIVED ANY MEDICAL TREATMENT.
WELL, IT WOULD'VE REQUIRED A LOT OF PAPERWORK.
FORGET ABOUT THAT. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A LIEUTENANT.
IT'S ALRIGHT. I RECEIVED THE OFFICIAL NOTICE OF MY TITLE CHANGE ONLY THREE DAYS AGO. YOU AND I MET BEFORE THAT.
"It's alright," huh...
THEN I GUESS CONGRATU-LATIONS ARE IN ORDER.

THANK YOU.
SO, UH, WHY DID YOU CALL ME?
IT'S ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE FOREST... RIGHT?
ゴク
I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT.

DAMURON, WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN MY PLATOON?
.....
... YES ??
THEN WELCOME ABOARD.
UH, I MEAN NO! NO NO NO NO!!

YOU CAUGHT ME TRYING TO PICK UP GIRLS, I HARRASSED YOU WHILE I WAS DRUNK, AND I LED YOU INTO A TRAP BACK AT THE FOREST.
AND THAT EVEN ENDANGERED YOUR LIFE!
I really sound terrible
THIS IS JUST WEIRD!
BUT YOU RESCUED ME.
THE FIRST TWO THINGS... MADE ME SAD, BUT I SEE IT SO OFTEN, I DON'T LET IT GET TO ME.

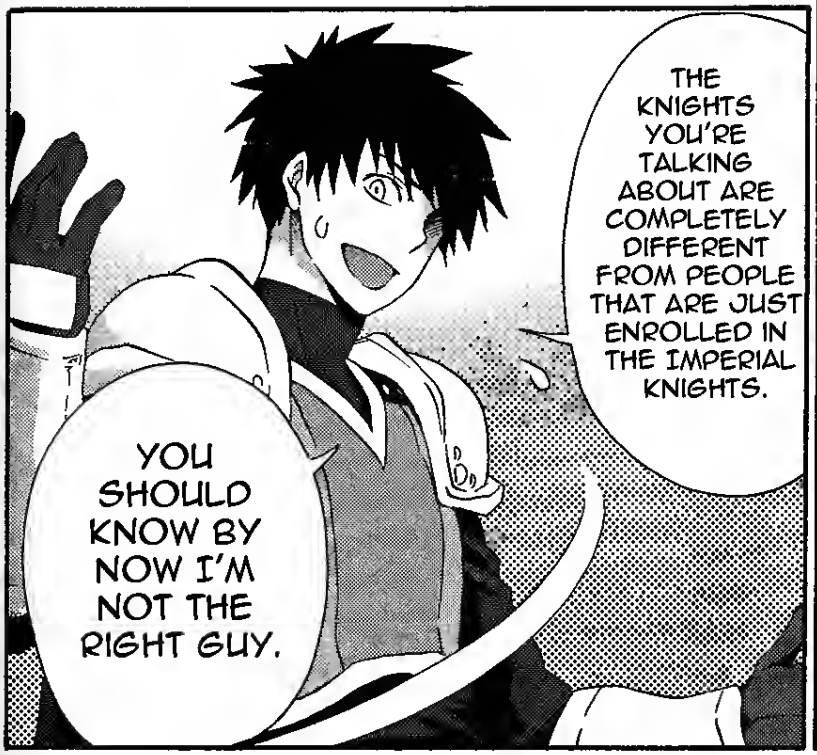
BUT THAT THIRD POINT WAS MORE IMPORTANT. YOU HELPED ME BACK AT THE FOREST.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO ABANDON ME, BUT YOU DIDN'T. WHY WAS THAT?
!!!
WELL, I CAN'T REALLY GIVE AN ANSWER TO THAT.
WHY DID I JUMP IN LIKE THAT,
EVEN WHEN IT PUT MY LIFE AT RISK?
I BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE A "KNIGHT," OR AT LEAST ARE ON YOUR WAY TO BECOMING A "KNIGHT."

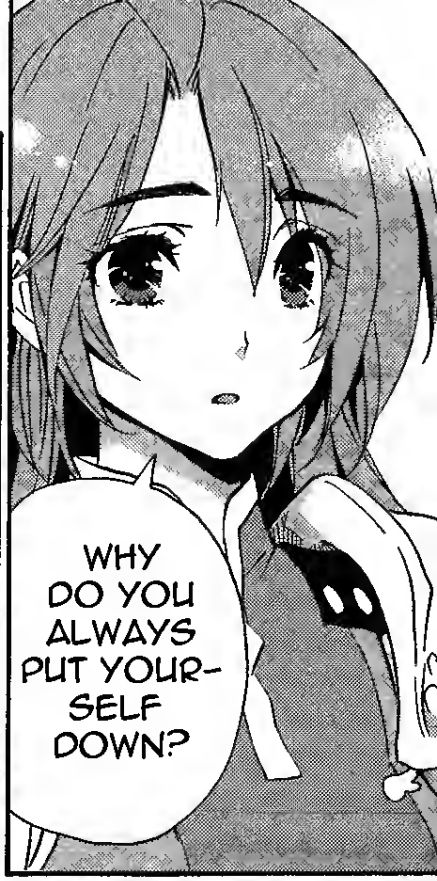
LOOK. HERE IS A DIAGRAM OF MY PLATOON.
THOSE ARE THE TYPE OF PEOPLE WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
A DIVISION WITH BOTH NOBLES AND COMMONERS MIXED IN...
I HEARD RUMORS THAT THE COMMANDANT WAS WORKING TO CREATE SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WHAT IS HE PLANNING TO START WITH THIS?

COMMANDANT ALEXEI JUST WANTS THE IMPERIAL KNIGHTS TO BECOME AN HONOURABLE INSTITUTION.
BUT THEY ARE NOT TRUE.
I KNOW THERE HAS BEEN SOME SUSPECTING SPECULATION ABOUT THIS.

THIS PLATOON IS A TRIAL GROUP MEANT TO ACHIEVE THAT STANDARD.
A GROUP OF KNIGHTS COMPOSED OF "REAL KNIGHTS" WITH NOBLE INTENTIONS AND GREAT SKILL.
WELL, hah I CAN AGREE WITH THAT SENTI-MENT.

REAL KNIGHTS...
WELL,
IT CERTAINLY IS AN INTERE-STING WEAPON. I'D NEED TO GET A LITTLE MORE USED TO IT, THOUGH.
BY THE WAY, DAMURON, HOW WAS IT HANDLING THAT BOW?
I APPRE-CIATE IT, BUT YOU'RE OVEREST-IMATING ME.
IT'S NOT A WEAPON JUST ANYONE CAN WIELD WITH NO PRACTICE. YET YOU PULLED IT OFF.
THAT WAS A WEAPON FASHIONED AFTER MY OWN BOW.


YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW I'M NOT THE RIGHT GUY.
THE KNIGHTS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM PEOPLE THAT ARE JUST ENROLLED IN THE IMPERIAL KNIGHTS.


WHY DO YOU ALWAYS PUT YOURSELF DOWN?

I BELIEVE YOU ARE.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT ISN'T WHETHER YOU CAN, BUT WHETHER YOU WANT TO.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
... WHY ...

WHY DID YOU WANT TO BECOME A KNIGHT?
WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT ME RIGHT NOW.
TELL ME!!
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, MY PARENTS TOOK ME ON A TRIP.

MY FATHER HATED BOTH KNIGHTS AND GUILDS, SO WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROPER PROTECTION.
ALONG THE WAY, WE WERE ATTACKED BY MONSTERS.
THE SITUATION WAS DESPERATE, BUT A SINGLE KNIGHT APPEARED AND SAVED US.
HE WAS INJURED IN THE STRUGGLE, BUT MY FATHER SCOLDED HIM FOR NOT ARRIVING EARLIER. AND YET, HE REMAINED SILENT, HIS HEAD LOWERED.
I WAS UPSET, AND LATER ASKED HIM WHY HE DIDN'T SPEAK BACK.

"BECAUSE I'M A KNIGHT."
HE SMILED AND LEFT WITHOUT EVER GIVING HIS NAME. HE WAS THE VERY ESSENCE OF A KNIGHT.
IT WAS LIKE IN THE PICTURE BOOKS I READ AND ADORED WHEN I WAS YOUNG,
A POWERFUL AND RIGHTEOUS GUARDIAN OF THE PEOPLE.
IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE DISAPPOINTING BEHAVIOR OF OTHER KNIGHTS I HAD KNOWN.
I KNOW THERE ARE REAL KNIGHTS OUT THERE.
THAT IS MY REASON.

BUT I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO ONE DAY.
NOT YET.
SO YOU WERE ABLE TO BECOME ONE...?
BECOME... A "KNIGHT" LIKE HIM?
A POWERFUL AND RIGHTEOUS GUARDIAN OF THE PEOPLE...
COULD I ALSO BECOME WHAT CASEY IS TRYING TO BE?

WHAT ABOUT MY PUNISH-MENT?
...LET'S SEE...

YOU CANNOT REFUSE. THIS IS AN ORDER FROM YOUR SUPERIOR OFFICER.
HA
I'LL HAVE YOU BECOME MY PERSONAL AIDE.
HA HA, ALRIGHT I GIVE IN.

I'LL BE IN YOUR CAPABLE HANDS, LIEUTENANT.
WELCOME TO MY PLATOON.

FOR WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THIS WHOLE TIME,

AND SO, MY NEW LIFE BEGAN.
I MADE NEW FRIENDS AND HAD A RENEWED PURPOSE. I FELT MOTIVATED TO BETTER MYSELF IN COMBAT WITH BOTH SWORDS AND CASEY'S WEAPON.
I CUT OFF ALL MY RELATIONS TO MY PRIOR FRIENDS, AND STOPPED MESSING AROUND.
I FEEL I AT LEAST FINALLY FOUND THE KEY

I WORKED HARD TO LIVE UP TO MY TITLE AS CASEY'S AIDE,
AND TO MEET MY FELLOW TROOPS FACE TO FACE.
YOU SURE LIKE THOSE FLOWERS.

I WAS HESITANT TO GO THIS FAR JUST FOR DECORATION.
SO THAT'S THE SORT OF THING YOU'RE INTO.
THEY'RE CALLED CYRTANTHUS. IT'S MY FAVORITE FLOWER.
But he would always... with those...
OH NO!! IT'S ALREADY TIME TO PATROL!!
WE HAVE TO HURRY!

I HEARD THERE WAS SOMEONE IN THE PLATOON THAT...
IDIOT. WHAT AM I THINKING?
"HE" ...?
DAMURON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? LET'S GO!
EACH DAY WAS SPENT IN EARNEST, WITHOUT THINKING TOO MUCH INTO THINGS.
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT!

UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE BEEN HELD BACK BY MY OWN SET OF VALUES.
BUT THEY'VE CHANGED, ALONG WITH MY PRIDE IN BEING TOGETHER WITH EVERYONE.
I MIGHT'VE BEEN FINALLY ABLE TO BECOME WHAT I'VE WANTED TO BE.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

BUT THAT NEVER HAPPENED.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN THE WAR BEGAN.